

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

_____ 1 (currently amended). A method of announcing an individual
_____ apparatus to a system containing a central apparatus, which
_____ comprises the steps of:

announcing the individual apparatus to the system using
exclusively optical communication;

storing information about the individual apparatus in the
system in the central apparatus; and

after completing the announcing step, the individual apparatus
communicating further information only through radio
communications.

2 (original). The method according to claim 1, wherein the
announcing is effected to the central apparatus.

3 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further
comprises:

announcing an intermediary apparatus to the central apparatus;

announcing the individual apparatus to the intermediary
apparatus resulting in an announcement; and

forwarding the announcement of the individual apparatus from
_____ the intermediary apparatus to the central apparatus.

4 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further
comprises performing the optical communication
unidirectionally from the individual apparatus doing the
announcing to an apparatus for registering the announcing.

5 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further
comprises after the announcing has occurred, outputting an
acoustic confirmation signal by at least one of an apparatus
registering the announcing and the central apparatus.

6 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further
comprises forming the system as a radio network.

7 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further
comprises forming the system as a data acquisition and data
collection system.

8 (original). The method according to claim 1, which further comprises performing the optical communication in an infrared range.

9 (previously presented). The method according to claim 1, which further comprises forming the system as a consumption data acquisition and collection system reporting information relating to at least one of electricity consumption, water consumption, gas consumption and heat cost data.

10 (currently amended). An apparatus for communicating with at least one other apparatus, the apparatus comprising:

an optical interface for implementing optical communication with the at least one other apparatus, the optical communication providing information about the apparatus for announcing a presence of the apparatus being previously unannounced to the at least one other apparatus; and

a radio module for transmitting further information to the other apparatus, the optical communication no longer being used after the announcing step is complete and only radio communications occurring thereafter by the apparatus.

11 (currently amended). A system, comprising:

a first apparatus being a central apparatus having a first optical interface for performing optical communication and a first radio module; and

a second apparatus selected from the group consisting of an individual apparatus and an intermediary apparatus and having

a second optical interface for performing optical communication with said first optical interface, the optical communication only providing information about said second apparatus for announcing a presence of said second apparatus to said first apparatus, said second apparatus having a second radio module for transmitting further information to said first apparatus.

12 (original). The system according to claim 11, wherein:

the system is a data acquisition and data collection system;

said central apparatus is a master data collector;

said intermediary apparatus is a data collector; and

said individual apparatus is a terminal apparatus and data communication between said apparatuses is effected by way of radio.

13 (previously presented). The system according to claim 12, wherein the system is a consumption data acquisition and collection system reporting information relating to at least one of electricity consumption, water consumption, gas consumption and heat cost data.

14 (currently amended). A system, comprising:

a first apparatus being a central apparatus having a first optical interface for performing optical communication;

a second apparatus being an individual apparatus and having a second optical interface for performing optical communication;
and

a third apparatus being an intermediary apparatus and having a third optical interface for performing optical communication, said third optical interface communicating with said first and second optical interfaces, the optical communication providing information about said second and third apparatuses for announcing a presence of said second and third ~~first~~ apparatuses to said first apparatus.

15 (original). The system according to claim 14, wherein:

the system is a data acquisition and data collection system;

said central apparatus is a master data collector;

said intermediary apparatus is a data collector; and

said individual apparatus is a terminal apparatus and data

communication between said first, second and third apparatuses
is effected by way of radio.

16 (previously presented). The system according to claim 14, wherein the system is a consumption data acquisition and collection system reporting information relating to at least one of electricity consumption, water consumption, gas consumption and heat cost data.